



# State of Louisiana

## Department of Environmental Quality



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Governor

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## DEQ PROPOSES SETTLEMENT WITH GEORGIA GULF

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) intends to settle an enforcement case with Georgia Gulf Chemicals & Vinyls, L.L.C. of Plaquemine for allegations of noncompliance with air and water quality provisions of the Louisiana Environmental Quality Act. The proposed settlement will result in a cash payment of \$400,000 to the state and in Beneficial Environmental Projects valued at \$975,000.

The majority of the issues being settled with the Georgia Gulf facility located in Iberville Parish are for alleged water discharge permit violations and failure to monitor valves and connectors for air releases of volatile organic compounds and for vinyl chloride air releases.

R. Bruce Hammatt, Assistant Secretary of the DEQ Office of Environmental Compliance expressed satisfaction with the results of the proposed settlement. "DEQ's approach to protecting the environment entails vigilance, involvement and cooperation by all parties involved. In this case, the issues of noncompliance settled were mostly self-reported to DEQ by Georgia Gulf." In outlining the particulars of the Beneficial Environmental Projects resulting from the settlement, Hammatt pointed out, "every time DEQ reaches a cooperative settlement, the environment and public both win."

Georgia Gulf will finance the installation of improved technology valued at \$700,000 to reduce cumene emissions from their Cumene Storage Tank by approximately 4.8 tons per year. Cumene is listed by DEQ as a toxic air pollutant that is often used to make products that go into plywood glues and paint thinner. A contribution of \$150,000 will be made to the City of Plaquemine dedicated to the development of the Waterfront Park located adjacent to the Plaquemine Locks. The project will serve in interpreting the historical significance of the Bayou Plaquemine, enhancing the corridor's natural and scenic qualities and providing pedestrian (handicapped) access to the Bayou's edge for passive recreational activities. Seating as well as interpretive plaques and natural exhibits will explain the importance of Louisiana's freshwater wetlands, flora and fauna. In addition, \$20,000 will go to the Baton Rouge Area Mutual Aid Society (BRAMAS). BRAMAS develops and maintains procedures for mutual assistance and cooperation in the control of emergencies such as fires, spills, explosions, and releases of toxic substances for the surrounding eight parishes. The Louisiana State Police will receive \$30,000 in equipment to assist in responding to hazardous material incidents. A contribution of \$36,000 will go to Baton Rouge Green for the funding of environmental projects; and, lastly, Friends of Hilltop Arboretum, Inc. will get \$39,000 for its proposed nature trail and environmental educational projects at its arboretum in Baton Rouge.

A Beneficial Environmental Project is a project that provides for environmental mitigation, which the respondent is not otherwise legally required to perform, but which the respondent agrees to undertake as a component of a settlement of a violation or penalty assessment. The Beneficial Environmental Projects regulations (LAC.33:I Chapter 25) were promulgated in August 2000. Each Beneficial Environmental Project submitted by a respondent is reviewed extensively by the department's technical and legal staff and must meet the requirements set forth in the regulations. In addition, each approved Beneficial Environmental Project is public-noticed, posted on the DEQ web site <http://www.deq.state.la.us>, and submitted for concurrence to the Attorney General prior to finalization.

Through the negotiation of Beneficial Environmental Projects, DEQ is able to advance its mission of protecting public health and the environment. Beneficial Environmental Projects approved since August 2000 have totaled approximately \$9,600,000.

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